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What are the main sewing feet that I would buy to start sewing?

Sewing machine feet allow a sewing machine to be used to full advantage. Each foot enables the machinist to sew an item or piece of a garment in a specific manner. While some machine feet can be used for a number of tasks, many cannot. Practising with each foot on scraps of fabric allows the machinist to become familiar with the feet.

The choice of machine foot is determined by the type of stitch required. A foot holds the fabric flat, guides the needle smoothly through the fabric and is changed by means of a foot holder clip or screw.

The main feet used for the every day sewing tasks:

The Zigzag foot: This all purpose foot is used for zigzag or straight stitch and is one of the most commonly used foot for most tasks that you would come across in sewing.

The blind hem foot: This foot is used for blind hemming or forming tucks.

The zipper foot: Slim and narrow, the zipper foot is designed for sewing close to zipper coils while feeding the fabric evenly and smoothly. The large single toe of this foot rides along the side of the zipper coils while holding the fabric and zipper tape in contact with the feed dogs of the machine. The notches on each side of the foot make room for the needle to pass through the fabric and zipper tape without hitting the foot. The position of the needle must be adjusted when using this foot. Because the foot is stationary and the needle is moved to one side, the foot provides strong contact with the fabric and the feed dogs when sewing, offering stability and helping to avoid skipped stitches. Place the needle in the far right or the far left position as needed and stitch into the notched area on the chosen side. If the needle is in any other position, it will strike the foot, bending or breaking the needle.

Button sewing foot: This foot attaches buttons to the fabric. Its large toe grips the button while the feed dogs are in the down position to allow the button to be sewn onto the cloth. Some sewing machines have a button sewing on programme and will attach the button automatically. Other more basic models will set the machine in a zigzag stitch to sew on the button in a left to right motion.

Buttonhole foot: This foot takes the frustration out of making buttonholes. Use this foot to make the tiniest of buttonholes or stitch one as long as needed, even large enough for a pocket opening. This foot is also good for making small buttonholes in tight spaces with uneven thicknesses of fabric such as a collar stand.

A quick note from an English tailor.

The main sewing feet that you would get, usually comes with a sewing machine when you buy one but the main feet I would say would be a zigzag foot, a straight stitch foot and a zipper foot and if you are going to be doing concealed zips then you would need a concealed zipper foot but those four are your main types. Now there are other feet that you can purchase as additional feet to your collection and I would recommend the button sewing on foot and a walking foot. The walking foot generally tackles all kinds of sewing tasks but is ideal when it comes to sewing leather.

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